

# On the Hoof



Bite-size local updates from SRUC Veterinary Services

## **Control of Watery Mouth in lambs this Spring**

We are sure you are all aware of the expected supply issues with Spectam Scour Halt this Spring. As the only oral antibiotic licenced for the prevention of watery mouth in neonatal lambs, planning should start now for any clients who may be expecting to use this product routinely at lambing time.

Ensuring good ewe nutrition (particularly for multiples in later pregnancy), correct body score for breed, lambing shed hygiene and most importantly ensuring adequate colostrum in a timely fashion remain the mainstays of prevention of watery mouth. Scanning ewes, conducting a nutritional review and timely pre-lambing metabolic testing (+/- trace element assessment) may all be of more importance this year.

The Sheep Veterinary Society have produced a guidance document providing alternative suggestions for treatment and control where there are outbreaks of disease, which is available at: <https://sheepvetsoc.org.uk/news/sheep-veterinary-society-document-written-to-advise-vets-on-control-of-watery-mouth-in-neonatal-lambs-in-the-face-of-limited-supply-of-spectam-scour-halt-for-the-2022-lambing-season/>. While no trade names are used in the document, the products mentioned can be easily identified using the VMD database, and a link is provided in the document.

5 years ago SRUC reviewed the patterns of in-vitro antibiotic resistance of E. coli strains isolated from 295 lambs less than 4 weeks of age. 52.5% of strains were resistance to oxytetracycline, 41.2% resistant to ampicillin, 29.8% resistant to spectinomycin and 25% were resistant to four or more antibiotics. This is a concerning picture, and is unlikely to have improved over the last 5 years.

The increased awareness of responsible use of antimicrobials alongside the expected scarcity of prophylactic product means that this is an ideal opportunity to support your farmers to reduce their use of perinatal antibiotics in lambs.

As always, if we can be of any further help, with this or any other query please call 0131 535 3130 or email [OnTheHoof@sruc.ac.uk](mailto:OnTheHoof@sruc.ac.uk)

